



NWS Des Moines

Now former Observation Program Leader (OPL) Brad Fillbach. Photo from is early days in the National Weather Service.

The Weather Whisper

March 2021

Observation Program Leader Retires!

Brooke Hagenhoff, Meteorologist

On February 28th NWS Des Moines said farewell to Observation Program Leader Brad Fillbach. Brad's role has largely focused on managing the extensive network of cooperative observer within the office's area of responsibility, including maintaining and installing equipment, as well as performing quality control and administrative duties to keep the program running. Brad has been an irreplaceable member of the team for years—often dubbed the “morale officer” - and his presence will be sorely missed. When asked about his career, here is what Brad had to say:

“As a young teenager growing up in Omaha, I remember experiencing the May 6, 1975 F4 Tornado that went through the heart of Omaha. The tornado missed our home by less than a mile. I believe this is where my interest in the weather began.

My weather career began in April of 1984 when I enlisted in the US Navy. After Boot Camp at Great Lakes, I went to Chanute AFB for Aerographers Mate “A” school. My first duty station was in Monterey, CA at Fleet Numerical Oceanography Command. While there, I worked in SPINTCOMM - short for Special Intelligence Communications.

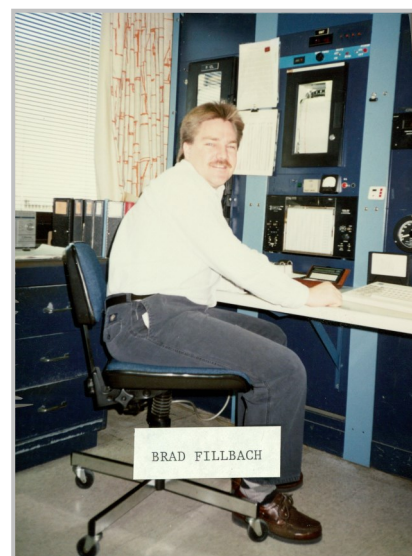
In 1986, I transferred to San Diego and reported to the aircraft carrier USS Constellation, CV-64. I did two West Pac/Indian Ocean six month deployments, one in 1987

and a second 1988-1989. On my first deployment, I didn't see land for three months as the ship provided air support for oil tankers transiting in and out of the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz. Some of the duties I performed while on the ship were providing weather briefs to pilots, obtaining satellite pictures from the old SMQ-10, launching Bathythermographs which provided support in ASW efforts, and many shipboard surface observations.

In 1990, for my last stop and my last year in the Navy, I stayed in San Diego, reporting to the Weather Facility at North Island NAS. My main responsibility was writing -1 weather briefings for the pilots coming and going through San Diego and more surface observations.

My NWS career started 11 days after I was discharged in 1991, being selected for a Met Tech position in Des Moines, IA. I spent my entire career in Des Moines. I was promoted to Observation Program Leader (OPL) back in November 2016. The best part of this job was the relationships I made with my observers. There were many memorable weather events that I worked during this time and the two I remember most were the 1993 Floods and the 2008 EF5 Parkersburg tornado.

It's been a very rewarding career and I have enjoyed working with so many talented people. I wish you all nothing but the best!”



Thank you for your service, Brad!

NWS Des Moines wishes you the best!

Iowa Flood Center Tools for Spring Flooding

Breanna Shea, Communications Specialist with the Iowa Flood Center

As spring approaches and with it the potential for flooding, the [Iowa Flood Information System](#) (IFIS) is available to help communicate flood risks to individuals, communities, and home- and business- owners, and to assist state and federal partners. Developed by the Iowa Flood Center (IFC), IFIS is a Google Maps-based web platform that provides real-time information on stream levels, flood alerts and forecasts, and hydrologic conditions for the entire state.

IFIS features include:

- ⇒ More than 280 IFC stream sensors that visualize river conditions every 15 minutes; [over 35 new stream sensors](#) were deployed in 2020.
- ⇒ [Flood inundation maps](#) that show the extent and depth of predicted floodwaters for more than 35 Iowa communities (and this list continues growing).
- ⇒ Statewide floodplain maps for every Iowa stream draining more than one square mile that show the 2-, 5-, 10-, 25-, 50-, 100-, 200-, and 500-year floodplain boundaries for all 99 counties.
- ⇒ Flood alerts and forecasts for over 1,000 Iowa river communities.
- ⇒ Weather conditions that include past, current, and future rainfall accumulations.

And much more!

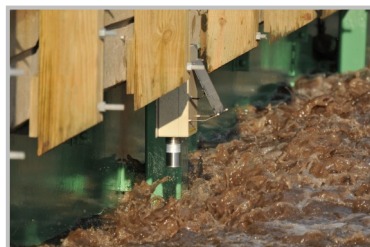


Figure 2. Iowa Flood Center stream sensor in action.

The Iowa Legislature established the Iowa Flood Center at the University of Iowa in 2009.

For additional information, visit www.iowafloodcenter.org or contact Breanna Shea (breanna-shea@uiowa.edu).

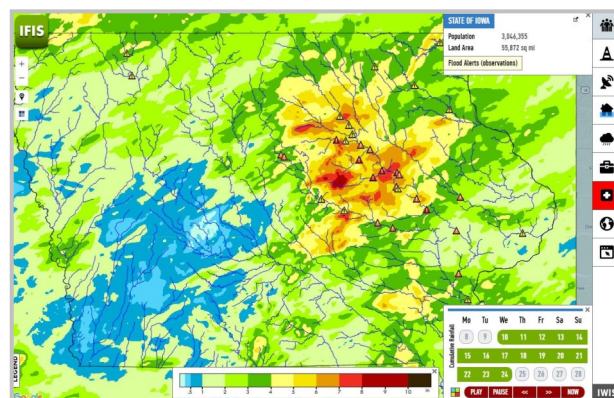


Figure 1. June 2020 rainfall accumulations and real-time flood alerts.

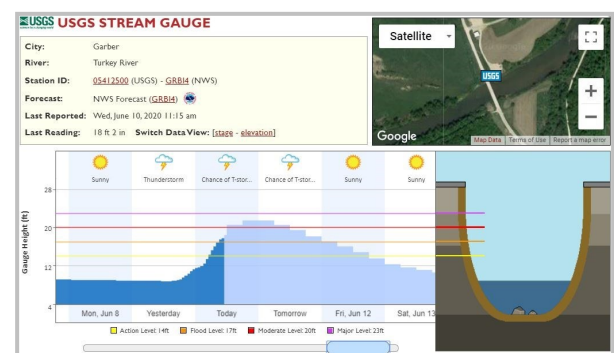


Figure 3. IFC stream sensors complement over 150 USGS gages and visualize data on IFIS.

NWS
Des Moines

VIRTUAL STORM SPOTTER TRAINING

7PM THUR, MAR 11

1PM SAT, MAR 13

1PM WED, MAR 24

7PM WED, MAR 31

7PM TUE, APR 6

7PM MON, APR 19
"ADVANCED SPOTTER TRAINING"

REGISTRATION
& MORE INFORMATION
<https://go.usa.gov/xsBP8>

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Iowa

Severe Weather Awareness Week

March 22-26, 2021